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APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT FOR:

LIFE EVENT MEMORIALIZING SYSTEM AND METHOD

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LIFE EVENT MEMORIALIZING SYSTEM AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 1. Field Of The Invention

In general, the present invention relates to graphic display systems for displaying various life events that have occurred in a person's life. More particularly, the present invention relates to systems where separate mementos are obtained for different life events and the mementos are displayed in an organized fashion.

15 2. Description Of The Prior Art

Many people collect pictures and other mementos from various important moments in their lives. Often these mementos are kept in scrapbooks or picture albums of a particular theme. For instance, many people save their wedding pictures in a wedding album. Many parents have scrapbook albums dedicated to each of their children, where they save pictures and artwork from their children. However, each of

these scrapbook albums or picture albums only
contains a small part of the owner's life. Rarely
does a person maintain a single scrapbook album or
picture album that chronologically arranges the
5 entire life of that person including all the
important events that have occurred in that person's
life.

There are many metaphors for life. One such
metaphor is that life is like a puzzle where each
10 event and each person in our lives interconnect to
complete the canvas of our lives. The present
invention is a system and method for embodying this
life metaphor in the form of a graphical display.

There are many types of graphical displays that
15 are also puzzles. In the generic sense, every jigsaw
puzzle of a picture or painting is a graphical
display. However, in such prior art puzzles, the end
result of the puzzle is known. The puzzle, when
completed, will look like the picture on the puzzle
box. However, when metaphorically applied to life,
20 the end result of life's puzzle is unknown and
cannot be ascertained by looking at a box. Rather,

with each new day and each new life event, life's puzzle grows and changes.

In the prior art there are puzzle pieces that can be used to represent life's events in a graphical form. U.S. Patent No. 5,588,240 to Zilliox, entitled Interlocking Picture Frame shows picture frames that can be interlocked like puzzle pieces. However, any picture can be placed into the picture frames.

Furthermore, the frames randomly fit together and have no framework limits. The frames are at least as large as standard photograph. As such, in order to provide an assembly of frames that represents all of the major events in a person's life, a very large number of frames would have to be interconnected in a disorderly display. Picture frames are, therefore, poorly suited for creating a graphical representation of a person's life.

A need therefore exists for a system where the major events of person's life can be graphically displayed in an organized system that has many parts, yet can be assembled within a conveniently

confined space. This need is met by the present invention as described and claimed below.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention is a system and method for creating a graphical representation of the major life events that occur in a person's life or within a predetermined period of time. The graphical representation is created using a jigsaw puzzle. The
10 jigsaw puzzle has corner pieces and a plurality of border puzzle pieces that interconnect corner puzzle pieces and form the peripheral frame of the puzzle. A plurality of central puzzle pieces are provided that are connected to the puzzle within the limits
15 of the peripheral frame. At least some of the central puzzle pieces depict different common life events.

20 The puzzle pieces are joined together and the central puzzle pieces are added to the puzzle only after the life event depicted on the various central puzzle pieces occur. This creates a puzzle assembly

that is a graphical depiction of life events for that person.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention, reference is made to the following description of exemplary embodiments thereof, considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

10 FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention assembly;

FIG. 2 is an exemplary embodiment of a life puzzle in accordance with the present invention; and

15 FIG. 3 is an exemplary embodiment of a specialty puzzle piece assembly that can be added to the present invention system.

20 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Although the present invention system can be used to graphically represent any event or period of

events in a person's life, such as a person's high school years or college years, the present invention system is particularly well suited in graphically representing the entire life of an individual.

5 Accordingly, by way of example, the present invention system is being illustrated as representing the major life events of a person's entire life in order to set forth the best mode contemplated for the invention.

10 Referring to Fig. 1, it can be seen that the present invention system 10 is a type of jigsaw puzzle. For the purposes of this description, the jigsaw puzzle, when completed, is referred to as a "life puzzle". The life puzzle is sold as a set of puzzle pieces in a puzzle box 12. Extra puzzle
15 pieces can be separately purchased and added to the life puzzle as will later be explained.

20 The puzzle pieces of the life puzzle come in three types. The puzzle piece types include corner pieces 14, border pieces 16 and central pieces 18. On most all of the puzzle pieces there is printed a text and/or graphics identifying a life event or a

guiding principle. All of the initial puzzle pieces of the life puzzle are provided in a puzzle box 12.

The purpose of the present invention system 10 is to provide a graphical representation of the major events in a person's life. Using the corner puzzle pieces 14 and the border puzzle pieces 16, a puzzle framework is created in which a plurality of central puzzle pieces 18 can be added. As will be later explained, the central puzzle pieces 18 identify different events in life. As such, when a certain major life event occurs, the central puzzle piece 18 corresponding to that event can be added to the life puzzle. By the end of a person's life, a large puzzle display can be had, where most of the puzzle pieces provided are used. The life puzzle will then graphically and chronologically arrange all of the major events that have occurred in that person's life.

Referring to Fig. 2, it can be seen that four corner pieces 14 are provided. Each of the four corner pieces 14 are identical in dimension to the others. Each of the corner pieces 14 has two flat

edges 19 that identify the piece as a corner piece
14. Four corner pieces 14 are provided in the
initial life puzzle 20. On each of the corner pieces
14 is printed text or an indicia that identifies a
5 particular virtue or guiding life principle, such as
love, patience, wisdom and the like. Since these
virtues or life principles are part of every
person's life, any person assembling the life puzzle
20 will instantly qualify to use the corner pieces

10 14.

In the shown embodiment, there are two
different configurations 21, 22 for the border
pieces 16. However, the use of two configurations
21, 22 of border pieces 16 is merely exemplary and
it should be understood that one configuration or
15 any number of configurations for the border pieces
16 can be provided.

Each border piece 21, 22 has one flat edge 24
that defines the puzzle piece as a border piece 16.
20 The two configurations 21, 22 of border pieces 16
shown alternately interconnect to form a peripheral
edge for the frame 26 of the life puzzle 20. Any

even number of border pieces 16 will alternately interconnect and will form an edge of the life puzzle 20 that can join to the corner pieces.

The border pieces 16 represent the framework of a person's life and therefore contain graphics and/or text that identifies the various virtues and guiding life principles that frame our lives. Such virtues and guiding life principles may include self-esteem, goals, passion, education and the like.

The corner pieces 14 and the border pieces 16 interconnect to create the peripheral frame 26 of the life puzzle 20. Four corner pieces 14 and at least six border pieces 16 are needed to complete the periphery of a full frame 26. However, every time four new border pieces 16 are added to the life puzzle, the size of the peripheral frame 26 can be increased in length and/or width.

The central pieces 18 are all identical in dimension. As such, any central piece 18 can be placed anywhere within the frame 26 of the life puzzle 20 depending upon the preferences of the person assembling the life puzzle 20.

The central pieces 18 contain graphics and/or text identifying life events. Many of the central pieces 18 have blank areas 28 where specific dates and names can be entered. The life events depicted on the central pieces 18 are common life events, such as birthday, first kiss, date of engagement, wedding day, high school graduation and the like. These events are only exemplary and it should be understood that many puzzle pieces corresponding to many of life's milestones can be used. Not all users will use all the puzzle pieces that are provided and some people will need special pieces that are not provided in the original life puzzle 20.

On all pieces, there can be lines provided on the backside of the puzzle pieces. The lines enable a person to write on the back of the puzzle pieces and secondary thoughts, reflections or facts they associate with the life event or virtue exemplified by the puzzle piece.

In the original life puzzle box 12 (Fig. 1), blank central pieces can be provided that can be customized by a user. For instance, if a person

becomes a doctor and passes a state board exam, that person may want to chronologically arrange this event with a customized puzzle piece.

5 Another way to customize the life puzzle is to purchase a package of special event puzzle pieces.

Such a package of special event puzzle pieces is shown in Fig. 3. The illustrated package of special event puzzle pieces 30 contains life events specific to a doctor and would be purchased by a doctor. The 10 package of special event puzzle 30 pieces would include life events that would only pertain to a doctor. For instance, applying to medical school, graduating medical school, finishing internship, obtaining a residency, passing state boards, seeing first patient and the like. The package of special 15 event puzzle pieces 30 includes central puzzle pieces 18 but may also contain border puzzle 16 pieces so that the peripheral frame of the life puzzle can be expanded to make room for all the new 20 special event puzzle pieces 30.

Special event puzzle pieces can be made for many different vocations and situations. For

instance, special event puzzle pieces can be made for clergymen, firefighters, lawyers, and most all other specialized professions.

5 Individual puzzle pieces can also be sold. For instance, special puzzle pieces can be sold at tourist destinations. For example, in Hawaii a special puzzle piece can be bought that says, "visited Hawaii" or show some graphic relating to Hawaii.

10 It will be understood that the embodiments of the present invention that are described and illustrated herein are merely exemplary and a person skilled in the art can make many variations to the embodiment shown without departing from the scope of the present invention. For example, the shape of the 15 various puzzle pieces can be changed in many different ways. What is important is that the puzzle pieces interconnect to create a life puzzle. The configuration of how the puzzle pieces interconnect is not important. Furthermore, the images, text and 20 other layout of the various puzzle pieces can also be changed provided the puzzle pieces provide for

life's events within a puzzle framework. All such variations, modifications and alternate embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.